## THE CHRISTMAS EVE DANCE.

By Joan Frederick Gels.

CHAPTER I .

"I don't see why you girls don't want Mr. Nittach. I'm sure that he plays the 'Beautiful Blue Danube' most beautifully.

Judith had come in from the kitchen how your teeth chatter. Ve must have where she was making fuges for the girls to eat with their crackers and

know as well as we do that Mr. Nit- kettle and the sugar and the wine. tach can't play a two-step any better'n

"This is a barty, ch, children? Shall
a Tennessee fiddler. Of course, his blue
I blay for you? I am bracticing for
the Christmus eve barty. See! I have

troduced the two-step. "It's the thing." blease my children." she had said. "Why, they don't even The young folks lot dance the walts in Chicago any more." as the old man tuned up. Each read Now she was urging the girls of the the other's thought: Wouldn't it have Guild to displace Mr. Nittach, the village musician, with a cousin of her's, who knew "all the latest two-steps the violin

But it's not right to put aside poor, plaintively. old Mr. Nittach. He's played at every one of our Guild affairs and especially one," Judith persisted. "You know, girls, he has tried so very hard to oblige us in everything. He has bought to us in everything. He has bought the latest waltres, sending to Chicago for them, and he has even tried to oblige when Judith left a short waltres.

"Yes, tried," sneered Caroline, "but play the two-step," she said. "The girls he's never succeeded."

'I don't care," said Judith, angrily, "he's a dear old man, and he's always doing something for us all. If it isn't without. flowers for us in the summer, it's wine for our mothers in the winter. And if we didn't make much at our barn mas eve. I dances and ice cream festivals he was told Judith.

out. "I hope we will have sleighing for Christmas," she thought. "The roads are nothing but mud now. Dear me! Christmas is so near. I must go down to-morrow and see Mr. Nittach. Looks like snow flakes, mother," aloud, as she turned from the window to light the lamp.

my children will be."
"Pshaw," said Judith, getting very
red in the face. "Wher'd you hear

"I was just down to the mill. The folks there was laughing over it. I thought you was going to be an old

tach's with me now?"
"Well, I hadn't ought to, but it's the only chance I'll have to-day, and it's

better than nothing."
"Don't mention it," replied the butch-

er sarcastically.

Leaving her mother to clear the breakfast table, and with many admopitions "not to wash them dishes until I get back," Judith rode off beside the folly butcher in the sleigh. The village was quickly passed, and turning his mag down a little side road the butcher drew up beside the musician's gate. Mr. Nittach was just emerging from the door of the little white house. He was a little, wearned fellow himself. and his huge fur cap and enormous red muffler wrapped several times about his neck and brought under the arms, the two ends tied behind his back, made him appear smaller than ever. His face was smoothly shayed, his chin as prominent as that of Punch, and his little eyes bright as the scarlet tinge which adorned his cheeks and noce. "Hello," he said. " vas on the look

man? Vat is dis-an elobement?" and

the little musician laughed heartily.
Judith leaped down beside him. "I won't say a word until I get be-side your stove," she said saucily. "You are cold; come in. My! See

some hot elderberry wine; and you, too, William; it's a long ride to your shop." They entered the cosy sitting room, and warmed themselves before the "Bosh!" answered Caroline, "You stove, while Mr. Nittach brought the

bought der Vashington Bost Two-Step The other girls snickered. Caroline's You like dat two-step, Judith. But folks had sent her to school in the somehow I cannot blay it so fast like east, and upon her return she had in- I should. But it gives me bleasure to

The young folks looked at each other

After awhile Mr. Nittach laid down

"I cannot blay dat two-step," he said "Never mind," answered Judith, "you

can play the waltz.
"Oh, der valse, dat I can blay. 'Der

time "And it's no matter if you don't

won't care for it this year, anyway."
"I am so bleased," he said with a smile sunny enough to melt the snow

CHAPTER II.

The air was clear and cold on Christmas evc. Somewhat too cold, Willam dances and lee cream festivals he was always willing to take half pay. You all know that he taught our mothers music lessons and us music, and I hope he will teach our children music."

The girls laughed until the tears relied down their pretty cheeks, but they applauded, too; and Judith had won the day. Mr. Nittach was to be asked to play the violin at the Guild's Christmas eye dance. The girls delegated Judith and Caroline a committee "Feels like it would freeze

asked to play the violin at the Guild's Christmas eve dance. The siris delegated Judith and Caroline a committee to request the services of Mr. Nittach for the occasion mentioned. Caroline refused to serve. "If it isn't going to be Tom," she said—Tom was her cousin—"why, I won't have aything to do with inviting old Nittach—the old Dutchman."

"But it will be Tom, anyhow, for he can play the two-step. I'll fix it," she ended.

The girls ate their crackers and fudge and drank their chocolate. Judith was rather stlent. She was not a little ashamed of her speech. But when the girls had gone she went into the kitchen where her mother sat knitting, and declared that she was glad the girls had been so kind to poor Mr. Nittach, and declared that she was glad the girls had been so kind to poor Mr. Nittach, and declared that she was glad the girls had been so kind to poor Mr. Nittach, and declared that she was glad the girls had been so kind to poor Mr. Nittach, they said, and now it was no harm to hire. Tom also. Besides, they argued, it will give malso. Besides they argued, it will give malso. Besides they argued, it will give malso. Besides they argued it will give malso. Besides they argued it will give had been should her the vision no more. She was do study and declared that she was glad the girls had been so kind to poor Mr. Nittach, her wishes she has been saying unkind things about him. Even mother with a sigh.

She went to the window and looked out. "I hope we will have sleighing for Christmas," she thought. "The roads out." I hope we will have sleighing for Christmas, she thought. "The roads were than a strong in a way, too, the never comes to the house."

but it was pathetic. Poor Mr. Nittach, he always sends mamma wine or flowers, but he never comes to the house."

They walked over to the school building, where the dance was to be held, and William called attention to the effect of the moon upon the memorial stones in the churchyard. "I can see papa's," said Judith, and she stood silent for a moment. or a moment. Caroline met them as they entered

when she arose the next morning Judith melted the frost upon the window pane with her breath, and peering through the glass saw that

"The snow had begun in the gloaming, And silentiy all the night, Had been heeping field and highway With a mantle cold and white."

Her first thought was of Mr. Nittach, She must get word to him. Scarcely had breakfast been eaten than the jingling of bells annuonced the presence of the butcher from Oconoville.

"Well, I want to tell you," shouted the butcher, as he stamped into the klichem. "Lakefield's a great place, a greate place in a snow storm. Might have lost my bearings if it hadn't been for the nag."

"Oh, you kep quiet," said Mrs. Warner, as she prudently weighed the meathe had brought in. "You was born and brought up in Lakefield and your mother afore you."

"That's right, unntie," he said with a smile and a look at Judith, "and I hope my children will be."

"Pshaw," said Judith, getting very "Pshaw," said Judith, getting very "I menusclan was a long time coming when he did arrive he was profuse in his spectore."

"In is o glad you've come early," she musch. "You we worked awfully hard all the afternoon. I hope you be wished. "You're just in time to help hang the greens around the lemonade well. We've worked awfully hard all the afternoon. I hope you be brought the farchon. I hope you to be them, "You was of Mr. Nittach. He was only a boy of eighten to help."

Caroline met them as they entered the door. "You she wushed. "You've come early," she wushed. "You've come early," she wushed. "You've worked awfully hard all the afternoon. I hope you be lemonade well. We've worked awfully hard all the afternoon. I hope you be lemonade well. We've worked awfully hard all the afternoon to bake them, o' couldn't get over to help."

Caroline met them as they entered the well. We've worked awfully hard all the afternoon to help."

To use afternoon. I hope you be along the herdenoon. I hope you have help and a cone help."

To will it hadn't been for the butcher, as he stamped into the

his apologies. "I has said. "I has trou-ble here," placing his hand upon his heart. "But I would not you disappoint. I brought the two-step." he whispered to Judith. He looked really III, but was chipper, seemingly as ever, and he same kindly light shone in his bright

thought you was going to be an old maid, Jude?'

"I am," said Judith, shortly.

"Not if I know it." he said. 'Say!

How'd you like to ride over to Mr. NitMr. Nittach asked.

Mr. Nittach asked.

OD STATE AS ALL The Cure that Cures Coughs, Colds,

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"Swing your part "Swing your part all," he would call out left," he called. Suddenly

be girls cried. "Hey Bill," boys, " your left foot's dance Unished, the dancers made e lemonade Weil. The violin soon them to the walts. Next it was sadrille; then a walts; then a lan-

Carollus "Buy a two-step, Mr. Nit-tach, please,"
"If id blease, you, my dear," cried all the girls, but Judith.
Arr. Nittach struck up the "Washing-ton Foat," For a few bars he got along famously. Then he unconsciously swung into the salts time. Now the dancers stopped. "Wrong, wrong, Mr. Nittach, they shouted. It was the first time in his life int his playing had been questioned. In simple pride was hurt.

time in his life that his playing had been questioned. It simple pride was hurt, and his voice quavered.

"It had dot value so much in my head, he said, with a peinful smile. He tried the two-step again, and again for a two has he played finely. But once more he awang into the walts. Caroline and two of har cronics and their partners took their seats. The old gentleman soliced that, and by an effort got back to the two-step. A moment later, however, he fell into the slow, measured strains of the walts, and dropped his box.
"I—I cannot blay dot two-steb," he

stopped.
"I ain't goin' to be no guy," he said. The boys were grinning at him. "Apron strings," he heard them say.
The old musican was dreaming. He saw a crowded dance hall. He was playing that same "Beautiful Blue Danube." His wife-to-be was there, and that other woman, who, in his mellow manhood he had loved in vain. With these old-lime memories stamped upon his face in a loving smile the old musician lifted his head.
He saw the floor empty; noted the at-

clan lifted his head.

He saw the floor empty; noted the attitude of the young folks lined sullenly against the wall and a full realization of the whole changed conditions broke upon his mind. The smile faded. His rudy cheeks paled. The light went out of his eyes, and they grew dim with sad tears.

an observance of the Mosaic law, a nobservance of the Mosaic law, a norohecy of a "fooreuner," with an prophery of a "fooreuner, with an prophery of a "fooreuner," with an prophery of a "fooreuner," with an prophery of a "fooreuner, with an except of a "fooreuner, and whe had not bent t and passed out. The cold air chilled the dancers, "Glad I size goin' to Cooney to-night," said William. "It'll be cold enough getting home as it is."

Tom fronteally started to play the Beautiful Blue Danube," and the thoughtles ones with laughter began to dance. Judith prepared to go home.

Outside in the cold and snow the little old musician listened to Tom's playing.

ing.
"They are dancing to his blaying und
my valse," he said, brokenly. Then he
cried, for he was so cold and so brokenhearted.
It was the last straw.

The stragglers from the inn were

The straggers from the lim were shouting a last good night and a "merry Christmas" to the host as they stumbled across the sill, when they halted suddenly to listen to the strains of a violin. "It is old Nittach." they said. "No one else could play the 'Blue Danube' like that. But why is he playing outside here? He ought to be in the school."

"Maybe he's serenading his girl," sug-

"Maybe he's serenading his girl," suggested one.

They went their way with loud laughter.

But the inn-keeper braved the terrible cold, and listened.

"I never heard him play like that," he said, aloud. "Seems as though he's in the church yard."

At that point where the waltz grows most tender the music stopped abruptly.

"Guess he found it too cold to play," thought the inn-keeper, almost regretfully, as he went indoors, and drank two hot whiskeys, one after the other, "to the memory of other days."

In the morning Judith and William, on

In the morning Judith and William, on their way to service through the church yard came upon the old musician. He was sitting beside a headstone upon which were graven these words:

In memory of GRETCHEN. Wife of Herman Nittach, Died December 25, 1879. "Peace on earth, good will to-ward all men."

He was quits cold, but a sweet amile lingering about the corners of his mouth made his face warm and life-like. One arm say catesializity over his vio-lin, half hisders in the snow. And the strings of the violin were snapped in twain.

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Caroline and two of har cronics and their pariness sook their seats. The old gentleman noticed that, and by an effort got back to the two-step. A moment later, however, he fell into the slow, measured strains of the waits, and dropped his box.

"I--I cannot blay dot two-steb," he said dejectedly, "Tom," said Caroline, peremptorily, "You play it."

Tom," said Caroline, peremptorily, "You play it."

They danced so Tom's music. Judith brought life, silled admirably. When they danced so Tom's music. Judith brought life, silled admirably. When they danced so Tom's music. Judith end for each started to time up for the dance, he started to time up for the waits. But Caroline and a number of the girls directed Tom to play the two-step. The older musician stopped, bewildered.

Judith waited swiftly to the centre of the room.

"I was placed in charge of this dance," she said wheremally, "I am the President of this Guild. I hired Mr. Nittach to play, and he is going to play." The dancers were awed. Even Caroline was a trifle taken a-back.

Mr. Nittach played the waitz. Not more than half of the young people dance. When he had finished a dozen voices abouted for Tom, and the two-step. Caroline was going among the girls coupling "Judith" and "would be bose."

"The next dance on the programme." Judith amountsed "will be a lanciers." They murmur against the government. Judith a mounted for Tom, and the two-step. Caroline was going among the girls coupling "Judith" and "would be bose."

"The next dance on the programme." Judith amountsed "will be a lanciers." They murmur against the government of God. They are dominated by the

bysa."

"The next dance on the programme."

They murmur against the government Judith announced. "will be a lanciera."

She and William took their pisce to make up a set. None followed suit. Mr. Nittach had been busy with his music, and called out 'ready' without glancing up. He began to play. Then he leoked around. Only Judith, glancing indigmantly at her fellow members of the Guild, and William, looking a bit shame-faced, were on the floor.

"Are you not to dance?" queried the musician. "Eaf I a mistake made? Is it a value?"

"What have we for show for "What is the profit?" with the inflection which suggests and anticipates the answer, the around the suggests and anticipates the answer. suggests and anticipates the answer "None!" "What have we to show for

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ing for kidney allments, backache, ner-

would cure me. The doctors said my disease was constitutional kidney trouble and that I would never be well again, as my case was incurable. I suffered constantly with an aching pain across the small of my back, and the discharges of the kidney secretions were at times excessive and at other times very frequent, but soant, and attended with nain.

is composed of a host of grumblers. They murmur against the government

nusician. "Haf I a mistake made? Is to avise?"

"Yes" said Judith, seising the opportive to a stempting to cover her retreat. "Play the waitz."

If vill der "Besultful Blue Danube' lay. You vill dance den."

He played with great geal. The leasures of other years, when he had layed that waits for the parents of by young seogle before him came rowding back upon his memory. His hecks were lovingly laid against the folin. There were tears in his eyea. But happily there is a church within the church. The prophet problems who hold Ged in loving reverence, they were rebellions. Judith and William had the floor alone. Then William had the floor alone. Then William was deficitation, God, who seems to Those who invite the judgments of God by their deflance escape unharmed." It is the Church of the Unholy Grumblera But happily there is a church within the church. The prophet proceeds to describe it. It is composed of those who hold God in loving reverence. They meet at short intervals for religious converse, for mutual strengthening and edification. God, who seems to take no notice of the wicked, makes a record of those who fear Him and think upon His name. In the day of final accounting He will esteem them as His portion. In that day it will be clearly seen that there is a difference between the good and the evil. A day of wrath is in store for the wicked. Their destruction shall be as complete as the burning of the chaff or the brush-heap. But to the "Church within the church," the Lord's coming will be like the sunriss. In the poet's fancy the beams of the sun are like the expanded wings of a bird, "implying the winged swiftness with which God appears for the relief of His people." Gamboling calves—and treading the wicked like ashes—are orientalisms for joy and victory. The paragraph closes with an injunction to an observance of the Mosaic law, a prophecy of a "foreruner." with an outilining of his mission, namely, to prophecy of a "forerunner." with an outlining of his mission, namely, to turn degenerate descendants back to the faith of their fathers.

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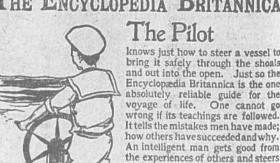
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